

WEST SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

The mission of our program is to maintain the grounds of all our school, service and administrative buildings in an aesthetically pleasing and safe condition. These areas include all lawns, trees, landscape plantings, athletic fields, parking lots, sidewalks, and roadways. We maintain these areas in a safe and attractive condition within provided budgets.

This maintenance program is initiated by the Maintenance Department, Custodians and Maintenance staff under the direction and responsibility of the Maintenance Supervisor. Our own staff performs most labor-intensive work. Agricultural chemical applications and major tree work is done through the services of a professional tree and tree maintenance contractor when needed. The contractor must be a certified pesticide applicator and licensed by the State of Wisconsin to do such work. The Maintenance Supervisor supervises the contractors and no work can be performed without authorization and proper notification.

Our maintenance operation may include insect traps and field monitoring for weeds, insects, and disease in the lawns and landscape plantings. By following a program of this type we make pesticide applications only when necessary. Applications of herbicide and pesticide are more often done by "spot" treatment only to the plant or area infested. This method greatly reduces the need for blanket applications and decreases the amount of pesticide use. Preventative pesticide applications on District grounds will only occur under unusual circumstances. Correct cultural practices are a key ingredient of our program and include seeding of lawns and fields with varieties of grasses that perform well in our area and are resistant to heavy athletic use. We also stress liming and fertilization based on soil test results, soil aeration, top dressing, proper mowing height, and irrigation if possible. The intent is to maintain a healthy stand of turf and ornamental plantings that will withstand occasional pest infestations and require limited use of pesticides.

In the event a situation arises that warrants a second opinion we involve experts from the County Extension Office or seek advice from turf grass professionals. The Maintenance Supervisor will make final decisions on problem treatments.

Our training program will include ground maintenance techniques and topics aimed at identification of problems. The maintenance staff is encouraged to attend horticultural

seminars and training program offered by the County Extension Office or Professional Turf Grass organizations.

#### APPLICATIONS

##### 1. Fertilizer:

All applications are done to maintain healthy grass and to promote aggressive growth with the intent to crowd out undesirable weeds. Applications will be tied to soil analysis. Most areas receive one application during fall, September-October, and one application during spring, April-May. Applications are either liquid or granular. The source of nitrogen preferred is of the slow release type to lengthen green up time and prevent leaching.

##### 2. Herbicides:

Weed killers are to be used as spot treatments, that is, treating only areas that warrant the use of herbicides to eliminate an infestation that is severely competing with the desirable turf grasses. Our IPM program requires that we monitor all areas to determine treatments. In some cases solutions may require re-seeding or over seeding to enable reestablishment of turf grass. Our maintenance program will not normally include broadcasting of herbicides over entire District grounds. Our goal is not to have perfectly weed free lawns but areas that are mostly desirable grasses that provide a safe, comfortable, and attractive ground cover. Broadleaf weeds are controlled with herbicide, generally a spring or fall application. Crabgrass on athletic fields is controlled with a post emergent, generally a late June-early July application based on germination and emergence.

##### 3. Total Vegetation Control:

TVC is an important practice in our maintenance program. These applications significantly reduce the amount of manual weeding in many areas such as fence lines, signposts, parking lots, curb lines, and sidewalks. We currently use Roundup. This application is usually performed once and is done from late spring to early summer, depending on weed emergence and growth. Secondary applications are done on a case by case basis.

##### 4. Fungicide:

We have not experienced a great need to apply fungicides. Fungicide use is based upon confirmation of a problem. We monitor athletic fields, where fertilizer and irrigation may create conditions that would allow fungal growths.

5. Liming:

Application of lime materials is done during late fall or spring. All applications are done in accordance to soil test results with the objective to raise soil pH suitable ranges for optimum grass growth.

Cultural Methods

1. Mowing:

All District lawns are mowed on a weekly basis at approximately a 2 to 3 inch cut. All grass clippings are left to decompose naturally. Athletic fields are mowed at approximately 2 inches during the season and 3 inches during the off-season depending on the sport.

2. Seeding:

Worn or bare areas on district lawns and athletic fields are reseeded in the spring between April 1 and May 15 and fall between August 15 and October 15. Most of our reseed efforts are directed at repairing snowplow damage and maintaining soccer and football fields. These fields get extensive use during all three seasons. Most of the reseeded is done with a mechanical slit seeder. We also test different species of grasses to determine which mixture is best for high traffic areas.

3. Aeration:

Most aeration efforts are directed at athletic fields. They are aerated 2 times annually to reduce soil compaction and improve growing conditions. We have also given more attention to lawn areas in attempt to create better turf conditions.

4. Irrigation:

Our school lawns rely on natural rainfall for irrigation, and during summer droughts many of the lawns go dormant.

APPROVED: April 24, 2001  
November 13, 2001

